(b) whether it is also a fact that India returned 93,000 Pakistani soldiers caught in the 1971 war as part of the Shimla Accord but Pakistan chose to abuse it by not returning ours; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to ensure that Pakistan releases our Prisoners of War?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) According to available information, 74 Indian PoWs are believed to be in Pakistani jails including 54 since 1971-72. However Pakistan does not accept the presence of Indian PoWs in its jails, Government have been consistently taking up this issue with Government of Pakistan at various levels.

(c) In pursuance of the efforts to locate Indian PoWs, Government have been requesting the Pakistan Government to accept a visit by the families of the missing defence personnel to Pakistan. In January 2007, the matter was again taken up with the Government of Pakistan and it has agreed to accept a visit of families of PoWs.

Relief and rehabilitation of refugees

3861. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the question of providing relief and rehabilitation to refugees from one country to the other was taken up at recent meeting of the SAARC countries;

(b) if so, what specific proposals pertaining to this issue were considered at the SAARC meet; and

(c) the decisions that were taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No,

(b) and (c) Do not arise.